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1963/03/01

21. Kirkpatrick, Memorandum for the Director, "White House Meeting on 10 September 1962 on Cuban Overflights," 1 March 1963

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1 March 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: White House Meeting on 10 September 1962
on Cuban Overflights

1. The following is a reconstruction of the reasons for the meeting at the White House in Mr. McGeorge Bundy's office on 10 September 1962 at approximately 5:45 p.m., and a report on what transpired at that meeting. This memorandum is based upon discussions with Mr. Parrott of the White House, General Carter, Dr. Herbert Scoville, and Messrs. [REDACTED] and Reber of Dr. Scoville's office who also attended the meeting.

2. A memorandum for the record prepared by Mr. McMahon [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] records that at approximately 10:00 on the morning of 10 September he received a telephone call from Mr. Parrott passing on a request made by Mr. Bundy on behalf of the Secretary of State. According to Mr. Parrott, the Secretary of State had expressed the hope that there wouldn't be any incidents this week, and Mr. Bundy asked that the following questions posed by the Secretary of State be answered.

a. How important is it to our intelligence objectives that we overfly Cuban soil?

b. How much would our intelligence suffer if we limited our reconnaissance to peripheral activities utilizing oblique photography?

c. Is there anyone in the planning of these missions who might wish to provoke an incident?

3. Mr. Parrott indicated that Mr. Bundy desired an answer within a half hour. Mr. McMahon immediately contacted the Chairman of COMOR which was in session at that moment, and they agreed to provide a response as quickly as possible. Mr. Parrott called a second time to advise Mr. McMahon that Mr. Roger Hillsman had advised that he

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would accept the responsibility for providing the answers to the Secretary of State, and that he had scheduled a meeting that afternoon with Mr. James Reber, the Chairman of COMOR, in order to obtain the answers.

4. With the above background to the meeting, it is apparent that the primary concern was to insure that there would be no incidents involving a U-2 in the overhead reconnaissance of Cuba. (You will recall that it was at this time that there had been two U-2 incidents--one over China and one over Sakhalin--which had caused considerable noise level.) The meeting opened with an analysis of the risk of incidents involved in the Agency's proposal for two extended overflights covering the remainder of Cuba which had not been covered in the 29 August and 5 September missions. Mr. Rusk asserted that although the information was needed, everything should be done to minimize the risk element and avoid a third incident. He urged that the routes be so designed as to have the U-2's over the Island the minimum possible time, and there was general discussion on the desirability of avoiding the SAM sites. The Secretary of State also made the point that he did not wish to have overflights mixed with peripheral flights, as he wished to maintain the right to fly over international waters with peripheral flights. He raised the question as to whether some of the needed coverage couldn't be obtained from peripheral flights with oblique photography.

5. The CIA representatives showed the members of the group a map of Cuba and the planned routes. The SAM sites which had already been identified were pointed out and it was noted that the routes planned would avoid these sites. It was noted, however, that there could be new sites which had not yet been identified along the planned routes. The CIA representatives also stressed the importance of the intelligence requirements. Messrs. Bundy and Rusk indicated that the group would not object to the overflights provided there were no incidents and that the routes taken over the land mass of Cuba were the shortest possible and avoided the surface-to-air missile sites.

6. The minutes of this meeting were prepared on the next day by Mr. Tom Parrott who did not attend the meeting.

Lyman B. Kirkpatrick
Executive Director

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The Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited UHI 2005

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
A	194 X	X	1391	X	Cuban Production			X		X		X		X
B	1392	X	18 1943	X		X		X		X		X		X
C	1393	X	19 1943	with NSA		X		X		X		X		X
D	1394	X	3 April 1943	2		X		X		X		X		X
E	1395	X	(60) white out		3	4	5	X		X		X		X
F	1396	X	the drawing	7	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
G	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	X	

The Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited: An International Collection of Documents, from the Bay of Pigs to the Brink of Nuclear War

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